Carbon neutral development project set for Grasonville

CBEC praises 'environmentally responsible growth'

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For the Star Review

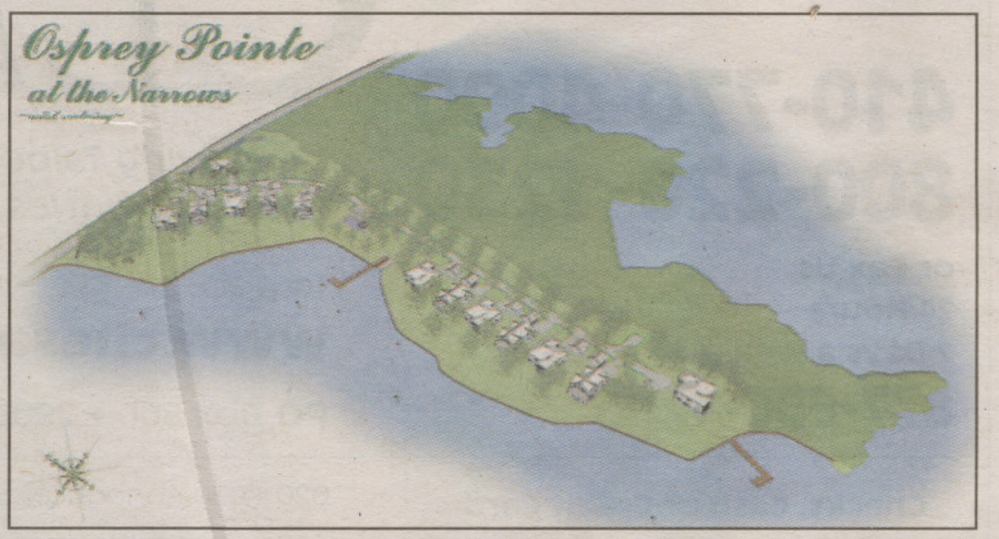

PHOTO COURTESY JODY SCHULZ

Osprey Pointe at Pierson Corner Road and State Route 18 just east of Kent Narrows in Grasonville will be the first carbon neutral community in Maryland. The concept plan includes 11 single family homes and a duplex, all built with solar and hydrothermal technology and sustainable materials.

GRASONVILLE — A new waterfront residential development in Grasonville will be the first "carbon neutral" community in Maryland, according to developers Jody Schulz of Shore Land Ventures LLC and Paul Zanecki of Nexus EnergyHomes.

Osprey Pointe at Pierson Corner Road and State Route 18 just east of the Kent Narrows is designed to produce as much energy as it uses, creating a neutral carbon footprint for the entire project.

"We're focused on reducing the carbon footprint in the built environment and helping reduce the demand for fossil fuels and dependence on foreign oil supplies," said Zanecki, president of Nexus EnergyHomes of Annapolis.

The concept plan, approved by the county planning commission on Nov. 12, includes 11 single family homes, a duplex, open space and common areas. Zanecki explained that while the community may use energy from the grid, it will also provide energy to the grid netting a zero balance at year's end.

Although Zanecki is working on a net zero urban renewal project in Frederick County called North Pointe that will break ground before Osprey, renewable energy was not applied to common areas there, whereas Osprey Pointe is an entire net zero community including common areas, street lighting, pool area and gatehouse, he said.

The developers will use sustainable building techniques and are seeking National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Emerald certification, which is the highest level for residential green building, and Platinum certification, the highest level available from Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

"Osprey Pointe will meet extraordinary environmental standards within its walls, and with advanced land management techniques, outside its walls," said Zanecki.

The project, entirely inside the 100 year floodplain, includes technology to manage nearly 100 percent of water runoff.

"Land and stormwater runoff management will include rain harvesting, underground storm water cisterns, gray water irrigation and extensive native plantings which, combined, will manage nearly 100 percent of water runoff at the site," said Zanecki.

While the energy consumption for the project is considered carbon neutral, Zanecki said the industry has not yet developed building techniques to establish a completely neutral impact but sustainable building techniques come close.

The concept of sustainable building incorporates a variety of strategies during the design, construction and build. The use of green building materials, water conservation and enhanced air quality are included in the considerations, according to Zanecki.

"With advanced air filtration, ventilation and energy recovery systems, the air inside the homes will be akin to a 'clean room,' which may be particularly important for the many people suffering from respiratory problems," said Zanecki.

The homes will operate from solar and hydrothermal technology and will be constructed of green materials, defined as renewable resources in "Green Building Materials: A Guide to Product Selection and Specification," by Spielel and Meadows, 1999.

According to the Guide, green materials are environmentally responsible due to impact considerations over the life of the product, including the environments in which the product originated and was manufactured, plus the environment it will be used in and its future recycling potential.

The developers said they are working with their neighbor, the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center, to improve runoff, choose aquatic plantings and benefit from CBEC's expertise in sustainable building on a similar piece of property.

In January 2008, CBEC obtained LEED Certification on its new education building and conference center which uses renewable energy and sustainable materials.

In a letter distributed at the Nov 12 meeting, CBEC Restoration Manager Vicki Paulas highlighted Osprey Pointe's attributes and said she hopes the development will serve as a model for future standards in the county.

"This will be the first development that promotes 100 percent sustainable and environmentally responsible growth within Queen Anne's County," said Paulas.

The proposed construction showcases "green building materials/techniques, Net Zero energy consumption and gray water utilization, all of which ultimately help protect the Bay while providing residents with a green living lifestyle," she said.

Schulz, president of Shore Land Ventures LLC, said he is excited to bring the project to his community and he hopes to break ground in the spring.

"With what we know today about the effects of carbon emissions, responsible development must include utilizing renewable energy and energy conservation in all our building plans," said Schultz, who noted commercial potential as well.

"I am currently working with Nexus to incorporate this technology into commercial development with the Fisherman's Village project at Kent Narrows," said Schulz. "I am also working towards a partnership that would bring a 65-person assisted living facility and child day care center to Kent Island that would also incorporate this technology."